

The LOOKOUT

OL. XLII

September, 1951

No. 9



Courtesy, Grand Central Art Galleries

“MAKING PORT”

From the painting by GORDON GRANT

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE

F N E W Y O R K

Sanctuary

God bless all men in little boats. In punts and wherries and ketches; in scows and dhows and dugouts; in junks, sampans and catamarans; in cutters and skiffs and sloops; in prams and shells and dinghies; in dories, canoes and whaleboats; and even, God, in motorboats. Amen.

— Gordon C. Aymar, "A Treasury of Sea Stories,"
A. S. Barnes & Co.

The LOOKOUT

VOL. XLII, SEPTEMBER, 1951

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REV. RAYMOND S. HALL, D.D.
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MARJORIE DENT CANDEE, Editor

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"25 South Street," largest
shore home in the world
for active merchant sea-
men of all nationalities.

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Errand of Mercy

By Chaplain Charles F. Nugent

EDITOR'S NOTE: Planes and helicopters are used on errands of mercy to overcome the hazards of time and distance. The Institute's Chaplain-in-residence at the U. S. Public Health Hospital, Stapleton, Staten Island, reports a recent incident where fast transportation played an important part in saving a seaman's life.

DAVE is a young engineer, in his late twenties, and married to a very pretty and a very nice girl. He sailed less than a month ago, and one day in checking over things, he found a leak in the steam pipe. His shift was almost over, so he asked his assistant to fix it. The leak worried him, and when he looked into the log when he came on duty, he found that it hadn't been done, so he decided right then and there to fix it.

"I've always been the one to yell about 'safety-first' with my gang," said Dave, "but I sure slipped up this time! I'd had the steam turned off, but I hadn't realized what a big leak it was. I unscrewed the cap and was

getting the valve loose, when the steam that had collected blew the valve right out at me, along with all the steam. Phew! I didn't know what happened! It knocked me right over into the bulkhead." Dave doesn't know how he did it, but he managed to get up to the steward, who ran for help for him. After the first shock, the pain of the burns was beginning to get more intense—and there is nothing worse than being burned with steam—and even the hypo which they gave him didn't seem to have too much effect.

"It seemed ages before anything was done, and the worst of it was I couldn't sit or lie down. They had radioed the Coast Guard base for instructions, and they in turn called the Marine Hospital in Stapleton. Before I knew it, a PBY had landed alongside our ship. I was lowered into a lifeboat, and rowed over to the plane. And that was 135 miles off the coast of New Jersey! The Doc in the plane



Photo by U. S. Coast Guard



"There is a tremendous spirit of camaraderie among the men in the hospital."

gave me another hypo, and it must have been a strong one, for I sure passed out."

Dave didn't know it at the time, but the plane landed at Floyd Bennett Field, where the Coast Guard had one of its helicopters all warmed up. It didn't take too long for the trip over to the Marine Hospital. The "copter" landed right on the lawn behind the hospital, and attendants were already waiting to rush him up for immediate treatment. Dave has been in the hospital for over two weeks now, and when I saw him today he had quite a beard. But as he is bed-ridden, he can't shave himself, and so has to wait for one of his friends to do it for him, or maybe get the barber to come up. There is a tremendous spirit of camaraderie among the seamen in the hospital. They help each other,—the ambulatory men even help to take care of the bed-ridden, which is particularly helpful, not only to them-



"A sailor's life is at best but a mixture of a little good with much evil and a little pleasure with much pain. The beautiful is linked with the revolting, the sublime with the commonplace, and the solemn with the ludicrous."

—Richard Henry Dana,
"Two Years Before the Mast"



selves but to the hospital staff in these days of nursing shortage.

Dave has had one skin-graft operation, and he'll have to have another one, for the third degree burns on his thighs. He pulled up his shirt to show me where they had taken the pieces of skin from his abdomen. His legs are getting better, but, as he explained, "They were only second degree burns." Then he added—like all the men who have been on their backs in bed for more than two days, "The thing I want to do most is just to get up out of this bed, and sit down in a chair again."

And he will, and he will do more than that, because he has the determination, and the courage, and the faith to do it, and those are the same qualities that help to make a man a good seaman.

CHAPLAINS VISIT SEAMEN IN HOSPITALS

In addition to carrying on services in the Seamen's Church Institute Chapel, and visiting seamen in the U. S. Marine Hospitals* at Stapleton, S. I., and at Manhattan Beach, Brooklyn, the Institute Chaplains are also called upon to minister to seamen in many other hospitals. Social workers notify the Institute when seamen are admitted.

During the past year the Chaplains have called upon seamen at the Beekman, St. Claire, Roosevelt, St. Luke's and Mt. Sinai Hospitals in Manhattan, the Goldwater Hospital on Welfare Island and the State Hospital on Ward's Island; the Long Island College and the King's County Hospital in Brooklyn, and the State Hospitals at Central Islip, Kings Park and at Brentwood.

Seamanship is not a sheltered occupation. It has more than average occupational accidents and diseases, and sooner or later a seaman may find himself in a hospital where merchant seamen are in the minority, and the expected visit of an Institute chaplain is helpful to his sense of belonging and to his morale.

JAMES C. HEALEY, D.D., Ph.D.,
Senior Chaplain

*Recently renamed U. S. Public Health Hospitals; 55% of the patients are merchant seamen.

A Message Inside It

By Marvin O. Rice

Pilot Charts Editor and Assistant Head of the Pilot Chart
Branch of the U. S. Navy Hydrographic Office, Washington, D. C.

Editor's Note:

Our "Message-in-a-Bottle" Benefit in the Spring of 1950 stimulated public interest in the mysterious ways of drifting bottles. Of 249 bottles launched by the S.C.I. on the seven seas, 36 to date have been found, and returned by the finders to 25 South Street, as requested. This is regarded by experts as a remarkably high number to be found. M. D. C.

HAVE you ever strolled along the beach and watched an object washing ashore on the incoming tide? If it wasn't "The Thing" in the recent song hit, it was probably a bottle containing a message. As you are an average mortal, curious and adventurous, you opened (or broke) the bottle and removed the "Bottle Paper." Such a strange and exciting thing to happen to you! You found instructions to the finder printed in eight languages, including the international, synthetic Esperanto. Closer examination revealed that the bottle containing the paper had been cast overboard by the master or officer of an oceangoing vessel many months ago and hundreds (occasionally thousands) of miles away.

The instructions to the finder requested that the paper be sent to any United States Consul for forwarding to the U. S. Navy Hydrographic Office, Washington, D. C., where the data would be used in the study of oceanic water circulation and the probable drift tracks of objects floating on the sea.

For centuries bottles have been used to carry messages over the oceans. Sailors and explorers, cut off from communication with the rest of the world, have, in their last extremity, put notes into bottles and thrown them into the sea in the hope that

they would be picked up and so bring help.

Distress Messages

Modern communications facilities have replaced drift bottles as a means of transmitting distress messages. Even so, a genuine distress message was found in a bottle as recently as a couple of years ago. It had been released 45 years previous by the Polar explorer, Evelyn Baldwin, who had written a hasty note calling for aid. He had sealed it in a small watertight container and had cast it into the Arctic Ocean. The message drifted or remained undiscovered for nearly half a century before a Soviet fisherman discovered it in the sea ice in the Russian Arctic. The note, written in Norwegian and English, read: "Five ponies and 150 dogs remaining. Desire hay, fish and 30 sledges. Must return early in August, baffled."

Forty-five years too late, the message had of course lost its urgency. However, the expedition came through safely and Baldwin himself died a natural death at his home in 1933. This is just one example of how messages sent in this way may be picked up and read years afterward.

Queen Elizabeth, in 1560, following a boatman's discovery of a vital political secret contained in a bottle message picked up on the beach at Dover, appointed an official Uncorker of Bottles. A British law, which has since been repealed, then made it a penal offense for anyone but an authorized person to read bottle messages.

Bottle messages have solved the mystery of long-missing ships. In 1902, two naval vessels searched the Atlantic for three months for some trace of the missing steamer *Huronian*. The search was in vain, but some five months after the *Huronian's* disappearance a securely corked bottle was picked up on the Nova Scotia coast. It contained a message which read: "*Huronian* turned turtle in Atlantic, Sunday night, 14 of us in a boat." The note bore no signature, and it was at first thought to be a hoax, but five years later its validity was confirmed when a second message was found in a bottle on a beach in Northern Ireland. The paper read: "*Huronian* sinking fast. Top heavy, one side awash. Good-by mothers and sisters.—Charlie McFell, greaser."

Bottle messages, besides giving dramatic, last-minute details in cases of shipwreck, often travel thousands of sea miles, thus providing marine experts with invaluable data on ocean currents and wind drifts.

(Continued on Page 4)

*Excerpts reprinted from "SHIPS & SAILING" by permission

Bottle drifts were the basis of early studies of oceanic circulations and provided data on which to construct ocean charts like Benjamin Franklin's chart of the Gulf Stream.

Unpredictable Drifts

The waters of the oceans, utterly indifferent to man, cover nearly three quarters of the earth's surface, circulating and intermingling with each other and making a mysterious world of their own. There appear to be no restrictions as to where and how sea bottles may journey within the general pattern of oceanic circulations.

Sometimes their tracks are unpredictable. For example: Of 10 bottles cast overboard in 1928 from a merchant vessel in a position in the southern North Atlantic near the Equator and St. Paul Rocks, only two were ever recovered. The first washed ashore on the west coast of Africa after drifting 130 days; the second on the coast of Nicaragua after drifting 196 days. Who can say, with certainty, why one capricious bottle chose to head eastward, while another chose westward? What became of the other eight bottles?

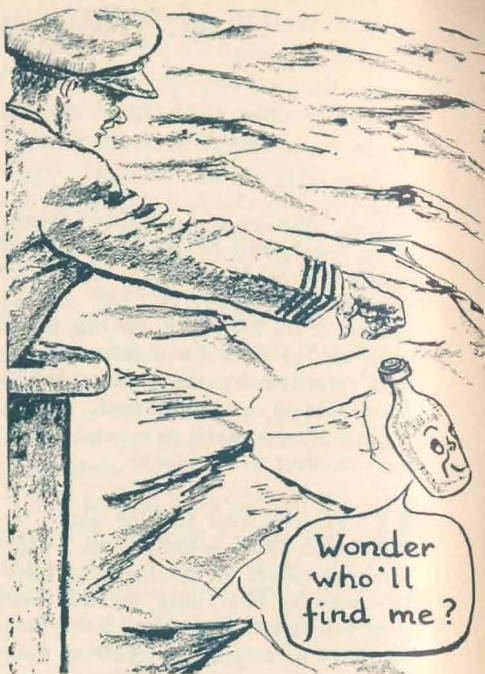
10,250 Mile Journey

Whisky bottles, beer bottles, catsup bottles—all kinds of bottles—drifting on the oceans! Imagination pictures these little bottles pushed relentlessly along by the winds and currents, buffeted by winds and waves, but usually coming to rest on some shore to be discovered by a beachcomber with an inquiring mind. It is recorded that one bottle drifted from a point southeast of Cape Horn to the west coast of North Island, New Zealand, a distance of 10,250 miles.

Drifts of 4000 to 6000 miles, and more, are not uncommon. Not so long ago, a bottle set adrift about 800 miles east of Newfoundland was recovered 31 months later on the coast of Yucatan (Central America) after drifting some 6000 miles. It was first carried along in the eastward-moving current and wind; thence southward and westward until it finally washed ashore on the remote beach in the tropics.

The information now gained from bottle drifts is not too scientific—perhaps less scientific than it was during the early 19th century, when relatively little information was available. Nevertheless, bottle drifts continue to serve very worthwhile purposes. Rather reliable predictions can be made on the probable routes of objects (such as derelicts) drifting on the sea. They will follow more or less similar paths, as they will be affected by the same conditions of wind and current.

In the Pacific, following World War II, there were hundreds of live and deadly



Japanese mines drifting at random in the shipping lanes. Many serious casualties to ships resulted from collisions with these diabolical killers. It became imperative to know where and when these mines were likely to be encountered if ships were to be safely routed across the Pacific. A study of bottle drifts provided the answer.

On August 12, 1948, a paper was dropped in a bottle from the American ship *Marine Flasher* when about 600 miles E x S of Hawaii. It appears to have been carried by the North Pacific equatorial current toward the Philippines, where the current is split by the land. One part turns south to form the Pacific countercurrent while the other part flows toward Japan as the Kuroshio current. Evidently the bottle was borne by the Kuroshio current to where it was found in Japan's Inland Sea on October 8, 1949, after a drift of 5900 nautical miles.

Finders Are Funny

Perhaps the bottle-drift method of tracking ocean currents isn't too scientific; nevertheless, the business is very interesting and not without its humorous interludes. The nautical experts who study the returned messages get first-hand information on what the peoples of the world think of America. The common belief is that America is paved with gold and that certainly there must be a handsome reward for finding a "Bottle Paper," despite the notice to the contrary printed on the form.

One Irish boy sent in a paper and needed a reward to buy food; a West Indian needed a dress for his wife and a Bible for himself; a Canary Island damsel requested reimbursement for travel expenses to the American Consul (where she carried the bottle paper) not only for herself, but for her *duenna* as well; one Irish colleen even requested a husband and specified that he be fat, "because fat men are more jolly, generous, and romantic."

Some time ago a bottle with its paper was dropped in the Indian Ocean and picked up in the Red Sea off the coast of British Somaliland by a Mohammedan named Mohamed Mustapha, who believed the paper to be of mystic or intrinsic value. As he was unable to read the instructions in any of the several languages in which they were printed, he mounted his camel and rode miles across the desert to the nearest British agent. After endeavoring to explain the nature of the find, the agent filled out the blank with the finder's name, and forwarded it to the Navy Hydrographic Office in Washington. The native departed still convinced that some great reward was his, and about two months later rushed into the same office. In his hand he waved a large pilot chart of his native waters and a letter from the hydrographer thanking him for his service. The chart, he insisted, was a draft on the American Government; its size, he believed, indicated a large sum of money; and he demanded indignantly to know why the local bank would not cash it for him.

Very recently, a native farm boy in the Azores Islands found a bottle on the beach. Inside, he discovered a note promising to pay the finder \$1000 if the note was duly presented to a New York address. It was not a hoax, and in fact the reward was paid. The bottle was cast into the sea near the entrance to New York Harbor as a publicity stunt by the sponsor of a radio program. The bottle drifted about 2500 miles in the North Atlantic Ocean, finally coming to rest on the Azores beach.

The Volstead Act and the Prohibition Era caused a shortage of bottles on American ships and resulted in a slump in the bottle business. What good were the bottle papers without bottles to carry them across the oceans? . . .

N. H. O. 84



BOTTLE PAPER

U. S. HYDROGRAPHIC OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D. C.
U. S. A.

(PLEASE USE LEAD PENCIL)

Thrown overboard by (Give name of master and observer):

Master, J. MASH.
Officer, 2nd AIRTE. A. VIHJER
Vessel, S/S NORMACPENNY
Date, FEBRUARY 5 1947
Latitude, N. 58°03'
Longitude, W. 22°22'

INSTRUCTIONS TO FINDER

Trouvé par (indiquer le nom, date et lieu).
Gefunden von (man gebe Namen, Datum und Ort an).
Gevonden door (men geve naam, dagteekening en plaats op).
Trovato da (dare il nome, data e luogo).
Hallado por (dar el nombre, fecha y paraje).
Achado por (dar o nome, data e paragem).
Trovita de (skribu nomon, daton, k. lokon).

Finder, PEDER SKJENGEN
Date, 1 OKTOBER 1949
Locality, SKJENGEN

Post-office address of finder, UTVORDE
FLATANGER NORGE

The finder of this will please send it to any United States Consul, or forward it direct to the Hydrographic Office, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.



A bottle cast overboard from the Moore-McCormack ship *Mormacpenn* when about 350 miles south of Reykjavik, Iceland, on February 5, 1947, began an immediate drift northwest with the North Atlantic drift. This consists of the original Gulf Stream mixed with water from the cold Labrador current. After drifting about 800 miles, the bottle was set ashore on the coast of Norway on October 1, 1949, two years and nine months later. After mixing with cold Arctic waters, this particular part of the current sinks into the ocean's depths.



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(Continued on Page 5)

Slippery Salvage—A Tall Tale

By H. W. Corning, Engineer*

**A member of the Artists & Writers Club sponsored by the S.C.I.N.Y., Mr. Corning died recently in the Marine Hospital at Stapleton, Staten Island.*

ONE summer night around the old barrel stove at the country store the conversation drifted to ships' masts. A logger turned to Uncle Elair:

"Say, Unc, about that Swensen fellow you told us about who drifted on a life raft into the Sargasso Sea and found enough driftwood to build his own island—would his trees be tall enough for ships' masts?"

"Well," answered Uncle Elair, "a few of his cocoanut and royal palms would be tall enough but they wouldn't be strong enough—too pithy. None of Swensen's island trees could be used for masts. Blow me down, young feller, that reminds me of an experience of which I'd be pleased to tell you—if you'll heave in on your spring lines."

Uncle lit his pipe and commenced. "All too soon after leaving that good old Hog Island ship I found that the high cost of living had thrown the cargo hooks into the contents of my wallet. So I shipped on one of those new-fangled high pressure C-1 ships.

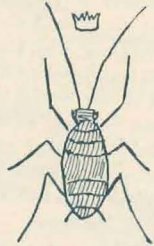
"On going aboard almost the first person I saw was the second assistant engineer I'd sailed with on the old Hog Islander. I asked him how he liked the high-pressure ship. 'I don't like it,' he replied. 'This ship has roaches and they've got me worried silly.'

"Why roaches?" I asked. "They're nothing to get gray over. Only on three occasions did cockroaches ever worry me. Once when after eating half a loaf of raisin bread I discovered they weren't raisins. Another time when I pulled on my hip boots before I saw that they had shipped a crew. Then there was the time a curious old roach took a fancy to my alarm clock. It didn't do me any good when word got around that I had christened him Archy, which was the name of my Chief Engineer."

"The second replied, 'Down below we have gadgets so delicate that if a big roach were to run over 'em or get inside 'em it would be Bingo! The ship would stop. Or if one of 'em ever got into the clock works of the automatic combustion board there would be fireworks.'

"Well, sir," Uncle Elair continued, "it didn't take us long to load our cargo. Those electric winches did the job right quick and we cleared gulf ports for Manchester. In spite of the Second's worries the ship steamed along same as the old Lakers and Hogs, only faster.

"We did, however, have bad luck in regard to weather. Gale followed gale. First it would blow like the milltails of Hades



"A curious old roach took a fancy to my alarm clock."

from one direction, then swing around and blow back like bats of the same place. I tell you, it was a relief when it let up and green seas quit raking us fore and aft.

"One morning I had taken advantage of the calm and I was topside watching the first streaks of dawn spread above the eastern horizon. The smell of brewing coffee drifted up from below and its tangy odor made me remember the old North Atlantic convoys. Coffee on those long night watches had been the one bright spot in the dismal picture as blacked-out ships skulked phantom-like through the darkness.

"Suddenly the lookout on the bow shouted: 'Submarine on the starboard bow!'

"Well, sir, being at the time not entirely over my case of shell-shock his cry sure did throw my upper rigging into a fog bank. Once again my war experience flashed before me like movie shots.

"The second engineer thumped me on the back. 'What's the matter, pal?' he asked. 'You're shivering.'

"Where's that sub?' I asked.

"Sub, nothing,' he retorted. 'The lookout made a mistake. See for yourself. Now that she's closer, it's nothing but a schooner with her masts gone.'

"We steamed closer to the schooner and shot her a line. Her crew, however, made no move to attach a tow line. In fact, they threw our line over the side.

"What's the idea?' demanded our Old Man, his amplified voice booming out.

"The schooner skipper shook his fist. 'Listen you buzzard,' he shouted. 'I'll lay here and rot afore I'll allow a stinkin' greasepot to give us a line so that you steamer men can claim my ship for salvage!'

"The schooner skipper's barrage surprised our Old Man but after considering the matter he had a boat lowered and he boarded the schooner. We could see the two captains having a hot argument on the poop deck. Then suddenly the schooner skipper said something and the two went below.

"Our Old Man must have done all right for himself for when he came back he had a case of Scotch. Then he ordered our mate to shoot another line to the schooner and this time they took it and we had her in tow."

Uncle Elair paused to re-light his pipe. "Well, folks, all hands began to figure where we'd tow her to and it was generally agreed that it would be the Azores. This meant a fat slice of salvage for each, for when you climb a salvage gravy train, brother, you ride Pullman.

"It was like Old Home week on board all that day and the next. However, when it was discovered that the tow line had parted during the night it was Old Home week in reverse. We asked the Old Man if he was going back to pick her up.

"No, men,' he replied, trying to keep a stern face. He explained about Swensen's Island, and added: 'The schooner, ahem, quite a coincidence, broke loose on the edge of Swensen's weed patch. I'm not going back there and risk fouling this new ship in that tangle of junk.'

"We dashed aft and examined the tow rope. To all appearances it had parted. But we saw dozens of cockroaches from that schooner swarming all over the line. So we never knew if our Old Man got a cut, or

it was the cockroaches that parted the rope. Anyway, the schooner skipper saved himself a salvage case. The schooner got outfitted with new masts for we read later of her arrival in Nassau."

Suddenly the logger sitting next to Uncle Elair jumped up, saying:

"Not so fast, Unc. You told us that Swensen's trees could not be used for ships' masts."

"Well, sir," replied Uncle Elair, grinning. "You can heave me over the side for shark poison if I said Swensen's trees. I said Swensen's island trees. To Swensen's weed patch had floated logs of all kinds—everything from tooth picks to a flag-pole. It wouldn't surprise me if the schooner skipper found his own masts and booms had floated there!

"So that's how we missed the salvage gravy train," said Uncle Elair.

"Just a minute," said the logger skeptically. "I've been thinkin'—how could those cockroaches gnaw that tow-rope? They don't have teeth!"

Uncle Elair chuckled. "Well, blow me down, that reminds me of the time . . ." There was a scraping of feet and a pushing back of chairs. "Oh, you've gotta go? Well, next time I get to yarnin' I'll tell you about it."

Missing Seamen's Bureau

By Shirley Wessel Sawaska

DOES an individual look the part he plays in life's scheme of things? In other words, do you look like the job you work at? Apparently I do.

The commuters' express was traveling fast and the train lurched from side to side in its eagerness to arrive on time. Occupying an end seat—facing the rear, I observed an elderly woman cautiously making her way down the aisle, and through the last two cars, at the same time peering into a sea of faces. As she returned, her face showed signs of anxiety and great concern.

It occurred to me she had lost something. As she neared where I sat, her face broke into a wreath of smiles. She bent forward slightly and said, so I alone could hear, "You know, I've lost my husband."

There are hundreds of anxious relatives and friends who say much the same thing in the same confidential manner. "My son's been missing for twenty-five years." "I've never seen

my father. Could you help me." "Is he dead or alive? I'm eating my heart out with worry." All of which means the same. "I've lost someone very near and dear to me. Won't you help?"

The Missing Seamen's Bureau does help and we have been instrumental in bringing gladness to many and peace of mind to others.

When a seaman has been away from loved ones and his native haunts for a long period, and our many investigations prove of little help, we add his name to the Missing Seamen Bulletin. The Bulletin is published quarterly and is posted on bulletin boards throughout the world in all places where seamen congregate.

We find the Bulletin a good source for discovering what has happened to a seafarer. Here are a few interesting discoveries.

On January 1, 1951 we listed Ted, age 70, birthplace, New York. Ted was last heard from in 1921, thirty years ago. A life insurance company was seeking his whereabouts. A few



"I remember seeing that fellow on board my last ship . . ."

months later we received a letter from a seamen's club in Seattle. "We are happy to inform you that Ted, listed on your Missing Seamen Bulletin, is in the best of health and can be reached at the following address." Ted will receive money due him on an insurance policy of his mother, Sadie.

The following might be called a "peace of mind" case. Worry and concern caused by not knowing whether a loved one is dead or alive is probably the most gnawing kind of torment. When this torment becomes impossible to bear any longer, then the desire to know the truth becomes prevalent. "I hope you find him alive but if he's in jail or dead I must know for peace of mind."

We advertised for Cecil, thirty-eight, for almost two years. Then a letter from Vera Cruz, Mexico arrived telling us of Cecil's tragic death. "Accidentally drowned." The memorandum included sufficient detailed information in reference to the subject for us to make positive identification. We much prefer a happier ending, but knowing the truth and a quiet peace

of mind is a relief born of courage to face life's problems.

Cesar dropped out of sight in 1935. Several years ago, we had inquiries coming from Paris, France, Washington, D. C. and New York. The files grew fat with correspondence but with little about Cesar. During our search and many investigations, we continued to advertise for Cesar on the Missing Seamen Bulletin. Then one fine day last spring an impressive air mail arrived from Port au Prince, Haiti, West Indies. It was from Cesar. Born in Paris, it said, and gave the year. The letter continued about being stranded in Kingston, Jamaica during 1935. How he joined the French Army and was discharged in 1940 and how he made his home in Port au Prince.

Cesar saw his name on the Bulletin while visiting the American Legation. His letter made us so very happy. You see, Cesar was left a large estate in Paris, France and we were eager to tell him about it. The conclusion of Cesar's letter gave us that spark to carry on. "With many thanks and admiration for your efficiency." We like to call it inspiration.

The Merchant Marine . . .

"I find it comforting to work with such teammates."

—Vice-Admiral C. T. Joy,
U.S.N.

Far East Command

MERCHANT seamen are vital to America's trade and commerce in peace-time.

In war-time they do the chores that must be done, without fanfare or glory—bringing supplies and men to the shore of battle, and tragically evacuating troops and civilians when necessary.

When Victory ships (built to carry only 62 people, including passengers and crew) evacuated thousands of Korean refugees from Hungnam to Pusan under the deafening screech of Communist shells, the Far East Naval Commander, Vice Admiral C. T. Joy commended the Captains of these cargo ships:

"In the successful deployment of ground forces and civilians from Northeast Korea your initiative and your enthusiastic and prompt response to all demands indicate that your organization is at its best when the chips are down. The *merchant mariners* who performed for you did so *silently*, but their accomplishment speaks *loudly*. I find it comforting to work with such teammates."

The Seamen's Church Institute is

proud that it serves such gallant men. When ships are tied up, seamen know that the Institute's Credit Bureau will tide them over. It offers decent lodgings and good meals at moderate cost, and its recreational facilities attract thousands of mariners when ashore between jobs. Its Chaplains provide counsel, its Clinics help sick and convalescent men on the road back to good health. Its School trains men for higher ratings. Its Library provides books.

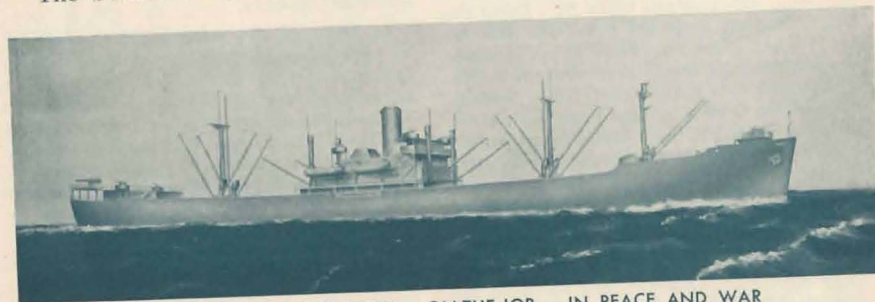
To maintain its numerous free services the Institute depends on *voluntary* contributions.

Its building on New York's waterfront is a bulwark against Communism, and a positive argument against those who would destroy our American way of life. **ALL SERVICES** are available to **ALL ACTIVE MERCHANT SEAMEN WITHOUT REGARD TO RELIGION, POLITICS, FINANCIAL STATUS OR SEA RATING.**

We hope YOU will lend a hand and help support the work done by this Institute in behalf of the men who carry cargoes and passengers and troops, and exemplify our democratic principles in the seaports of the world.

Please send contributions* to the **SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK, 25 South Street, New York 4, N. Y.** *(tax-exempt)

It has been serving merchant seamen since 1844.



CREWS OF VICTORY SHIPS — ON THE JOB — IN PEACE AND WAR

"Victory Ships, C-1-2-3-4 cargo vessels, and tankers carried 80% of the supplies needed for United Nations' Armies in Korea."

Donald McKay

By Edmund Moran

THE most famous man in Nova Scotia, was, no doubt, Donald B. McKay. The immortal designer of Clipper Ships was born on the bank of the Jordan River, in Shelbourne County, Nova Scotia. The date of his birth was September 4th, 1810. In the small shipyards nearby, the youthful Donald gained his first knowledge of wooden-ship-building.

Coming to America, as a young man, this enterprising "Down Easter" established himself as a shipwright; later as a hull-designer. In the early Eighteen-forties, Mr. McKay came to historic, old East Boston, then an island. He opened his own shipyard, at the lower end of Border Street, between White and Eutaw Streets. From his talented hands many tall-sparred, clean-lined Packet Ships sprang into being.

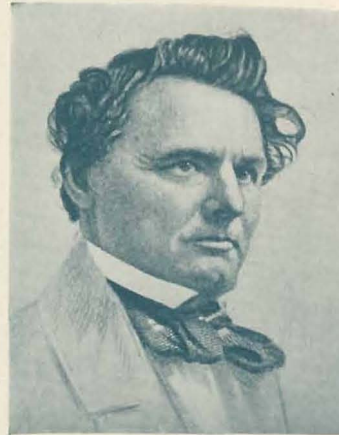
The storied "Clipper Ship Era" began with the discovery of gold, in California, in the year 1849. Passage in a swift sailing ship, via stormy Cape Horn, provided the best access to this teeming El Dorado, in the West. Merchants and prospectors clamored for speedier sailing craft to travel in. Contemporary builders felt that, in the Packet Ships, the limit in speed had been reached. Fortunately, Mr. McKay did not agree with them.

The East Boston ship-builder eagerly accepted the challenge. In the year 1850, the McKay Shipyard launched its first Clipper Ship, the *Staghound*. A lofty full-rigged ship of 1,534 tons, she measured 209 feet in length. Tall raking masts and wide-spreading yards towered into the East Boston skyline. Her model was revolutionary. Nothing as sharp, in the shape of a sailing craft, had ever existed. Actually, the craft was the prototype of all McKay's Clippers. Her magnificent appearance and the rapidity of her passages put the designer at the very top of his profession.

A few months later, construction began on the now-famous clipper *Flying Cloud*. In the year 1853, the huge *Great Republic* left her building stocks; slid gracefully into the harbor waters. This giantess was 334 feet long. The tonnage was 4,553, being the largest sailing craft yet built, she was regarded as "McKay's Masterpiece." Unlike her predecessors, the Clipper *Great Republic* was rigged as a four masted bark. She was towed from Boston to New York. On the eve of her sailing day, the colossal vessel caught afire; burned to the water's edge. Under a vastly reduced rig, she displayed phenomenal speed.

All available records show that the McKay House, a palatial wooden mansion at 80 White Street, was completed in the early Eighteen-fifties. This dwelling stood on the summit of the highest hill, on old Noddle Island. From its windows, the master-de-

Reprinted from East Boston Times



signer could see his own building stocks, at the foot of the rise.

During his long and successful career, Mr. McKay built 31 Clipper Ships, 16 Packet Ships, 16 Traders, 2 Sloops of War, 4 Steam Vessels and several schooners. His superb, East Boston built square-riggers carried the American Flag to the far ports of the globe. These speedy merchantmen made splendid passages. Their sailing records will stand until time is no more. Their saga is now a legend, on the glorious pages of sailing-ship history.

The invention of the steam engine and the advent of the ocean-going steamship spelled the end of the "Clipper Ship Era" in America. In the decade following the Civil War, the Clippers became obsolete. Prevalent world conditions demanded a burden which the white-winged racers of the past could never carry. European nations built huge, iron-hulled, sailing merchantmen. The smaller, wooden-hulled Clipper had made her last, dramatic stand. She could not compete against the iron giantesses on one hand and the thrash of the screw on the other.

In June of the year 1875, the McKay Shipyard re-conditioned the stately schooner yacht *America*, a famous "flyer." This achievement marked the end of Mr. McKay's professional career. Retiring soon afterward, he moved his family to Newburyport, Massachusetts. He departed this life on September 30, 1880. Donald B. McKay has gained Immortality. His name stands forever emblazoned on the proud escutcheon of Sail.

Tragically, not one of McKay's Clippers is preserved for posterity. Those not lost or shipwrecked have vanished into the hands of ship-breakers. To reclaim their copper fastenings, they were destroyed by fire. Some of the builders' models, happily, are

preserved intact; as are some of the original blueprints.

A recent visit to the McKay homestead, in the shadow of East Boston High School, turned back the pages of time. This edifice, now a tradition-shrouded landmark, stands on an elevated grass-covered terrace; facing on David Hoffman Square (formerly Monmouth Square). Its present owner, Mr.



From the painting by John P. Nenson—
Courtesy, New Haven Railroad

Thomas Cappuccio, has restored the interior to some semblance of former splendor. He is to be congratulated for his workmanship and perseverance.

It was awe-inspiring to pace the gleaming, polished floors of the parlor and the oval dining room, whose wide boards had known the tread of Mr. McKay, his brother Lauchlan and leading shipmasters of a century ago. The private study and drafting room are still preserved intact. Within these very walls, the world's finest sailing craft had originated.

The study room is a mecca for ship-lovers, a shrine for a legion of admirers; even in these days of "Steam and Steel." A long life to this relic of the distant past, the "Birthplace of the Clippers." Long may it stand, to display to this machine-ridden generation the rugged of bygone days.

Who knows what ghosts may visit this grand "old-timer" on languorous Summer nights, when gentle zephyrs whisper along the shore and the harbor lights shimmer in the rippling starlit waters!

A Message Inside It

(Continued from Page 5)

Hoaxes

No business is without its share of practical jokers. Occasionally bottle papers are received which bear such messages as "Ship sinking! Help!" They are readily recognized as spurious because the ship's position usually plots atop a mountain or many miles inland.

The Hydrographic Office received a bottle paper from a man in Wisconsin who claimed he found it on the shore of Lake Minnetonka in his home state. That, in itself, seemed reasonable, but upon closer examination it was found that the bottle had been thrown overboard in the Gulf of Mexico. It just couldn't have drifted up the Mississippi and its tributaries, made portage, etc., and jumped into the lake. Perhaps the mischievous pelican has a hobby of transporting drift bottles. Who knows?

All sorts of strange requests are frequently included in the letters that forward the bottle papers. One naive fellow in faraway New Zealand asked for information on a method of disposal of ambergris, that fabulously valuable ingredient of the most expensive perfumes. He wrote that during his frequent hikes along the beaches, he often found large quantities of the substance.

The Hydrographic Office has a competitor in the bottle paper business. He is a worthy preacher on the West Coast of the United States who collects "dead soldiers" from the trash cans in back of the saloons. He in-

serts religious tracts, and sets them adrift as an inspiration to erring seamen who find them to mend their ways.

One slightly eccentric tanker captain regularly plying the North Atlantic tossed over a bottle message each day. In the bottle he would also include an additional chit giving the name, address, and phone number of a young lady in a large East Coast city. Proper presentation of the chit would introduce the bearer to the young lady.

Messages to the World

A devout shipmaster always includes in the bottle the following message: "For God so loved the loved that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever finds this and believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

There must be hundreds of bottles bearing messages drifting on the oceans of the world at this very moment. Who can tell what outstanding news they might carry? During and after World War I, many bottle messages set adrift by shipwrecked seamen were delivered by the sea to all parts of the world. It is reasonable to think that many more such messages were entrusted to the sea during World War II, not only by seamen but also by airmen shot down by the enemy. Probably, as time goes on, some of these "letters" will be duly delivered by the sea, perhaps bringing news of the fate of sons, husbands, and fathers who went to war and did not return.

Last of the Grain Fleet Are Reprived

By Eric Thompson



Photo by Alan Villiers

One of the grain race ships, the *Parma*, a four-masted barque, has ended her days at sea, but the *Pamir* and *Passat* have a new lease on life.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

These ships were built in Germany in the early 1900's as part of the "P" Line for the Guano trade. Others were the *Padua*, the *Pamir*, *Panang* and *Pommern*.

A recent letter from Charlie Miller, former bosun on Count Luckner's yacht, *Mopelia*, now living in Germany, also tells news of the *Pamir* and *Passat*, which have now arrived at Lubeck, Germany. Capt. G. Herman will command the *Pamir* and will take 60-80 cadets of the German Merchant Marine.

M. D. C.

THE GREAT BUCCANEER

By Philip Lindsay

Wilfrid Funk, Inc., New York, 1951, \$3.50

In this carefully prepared historical account of the life and doings of Sir Henry Morgan, Philip Lindsay has gathered together a mass of romantic fiction as well as of provable facts about the great buccaneer who managed to gain himself a British title and the governorship of the island of Jamaica. Mr. Lindsay carefully sorts fiction from fact and, while giving Morgan credit for really great generalship, evaluates the man also as a prince of scoundrels, utterly without integrity even in his dealings with his own followers. The story is calmly, interestingly, judiciously told, not as a romantic tale but as a valuable contribution to history.

WM. L. MILLER

Seagoing poet, Eric Thompson, known as "Chips" because he is a carpenter's mate on the *R.M.S. Queen Mary*, recently spoke on the radio program "Luncheon at Sardi's (Station WOR). He had a book of his poems published in England in 1942 and he is now at work on an autobiography. His writings received first encouragement when he won a contest sponsored by the Seafarer's Education Service of England. Several of his stories have been published in *THE LOOKOUT*: "Survivor" (February '51) and "The Master" (June '51). He is married, has one child, and his great love is sailing ships.

"It's easy to stagnate going to sea," Eric told *THE LOOKOUT* editor, "so I vowed I would improve my mind by writing poems and stories, and by reading books about ships by Villiers and all the other good sea writers." Good luck, and good sailing, Eric!

FROM the final ignominy of the breaker's yard, it is gratifying to learn that the two famous old windships, the *Pamir* and *Passat*, have been reprived.

The two ships were recently towed from England to be sold to an Antwerp firm for scrap, but the West German Government, in search of training ships for German sailor cadets, purchased the two vessels, so endowing them with a further lease on their proud old lives.

The *Pamir*, a four-masted steel barque of some 3,091 tons, figured in recent years in being the last ship to carry a cargo of grain to England. It is pleasing to learn that her 327 feet length will once again grace the scene in an era of steam and oil-driven counterparts.

It is understood that the two ships will be taken to Hamburg, where it is hoped they will carry on the tradition and perpetuation of the square-riggers, in a glorious old-age of peace and prosperity.

Training youths for a maritime vocation will be a fitting end to so stately a career; a fitting epitaph might well be the words of John Ruskin:

"Every noble life leaves the fibre of it
Interwoven forever in the work of the
world."

Marine Poetry

WATERFRONT

This is a place that is part of the sea—
And the ships coming, the ships going—
And the old exotic mystery—
And tang of salt—and sea winds blowing.
The sturdy, ancient wharves—and that near
And vital throb of the sea bringing
Dreams—and a song for a lad to hear
When the fog's dark and the bell's ringing.
And strange cargoes from ports flung wide
Across the world—and the sky burning
Where stars of dawn shall ebb with the
tide—
And the harsh cry of a gull's yearning.
This is a place that is part of me—
Oh love of mine forever knowing
Surge of the sea wind—strength of the
sea—
And the ships coming—the ships going!

By CATHERINE PARMENTER

From *F.P.A.'s "The Conning Tower,"* 1936

NIGHT HARBOR

Dark water curls between the crusted piles
Where weary yawls came rocking home
across
The tumbling green tinged bright with sun-
set gold
And now rub noses in their harboring stall.
A lantern mounts and moves along the wharf
Where wafts of tar and fish and sodden wood
Drift through the darkness and the ghostly
creak
Of hawsers can be heard, like plaintive sighs.
Then through the misted gloom men's voices
float
And fall away, and someone lights a pipe
And clambers up a ladder, and the door
Of night is closed, and all is still again.

ARTHUR STRINGER

New York Times, March 2, 1951

SEAMAN'S WIFE

I have never really known the sea,
That binds you with such strong compelling
spell.
Yet when I have you home with me,
I feel I know the sea too well.
When in your arms, I feel its subtle strength,
That bends the will of men and ships.
But in the splendor of the star-fire nights,
I find it on your tender lips.
I know its grandeur from your soft-told
tales,
Of breakers' roar, and seagulls' cries.
Sometimes its angered soul I see,
In flashing tempest in your eyes.
You will again return too soon,
I cannot hold you. You are free.
Yet ever you will find me, waiting here,
When you come home. Come back to me.

By C. ALLEN NEILSEN

THE MAN DOWN BELOW

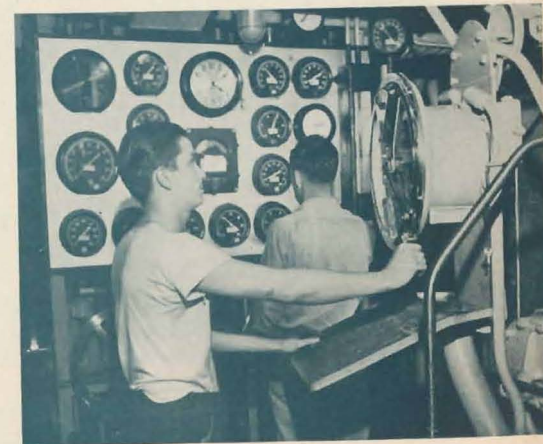
A seaman hauls lines, he scrapes and he chips
At the rust that's forever corroding on ships,
But a man in the black gang lives in the dirt.
He wears no clean tie, half the time wears
no shirt,
But he sweats and he groans, seldom gripes
and whines,
But he keeps the steam flowing through all
the lines.
And the man on the deck is important, we
know
But you can't do without the man down
below.
Now the purser's important, "a big shot,"
they say
For he figures out ways to deduct from
our pay.
So he's really a big shot and that we all know
But the guy in the engine room makes the
ship go.
Now the steward is "Hot Stuff," he's right
on the beam.
He's the best cut of roast beef and double
ice cream
And he's really "Hot Stuff," he's right on
the beam
But the boy in the boiler room keeps up
the steam.
The master shoots stars and the mate takes
the sun,
While the boys in the black gang make the
ship run.
And all those on top are needed we know,
But you can't do without the man down
below.

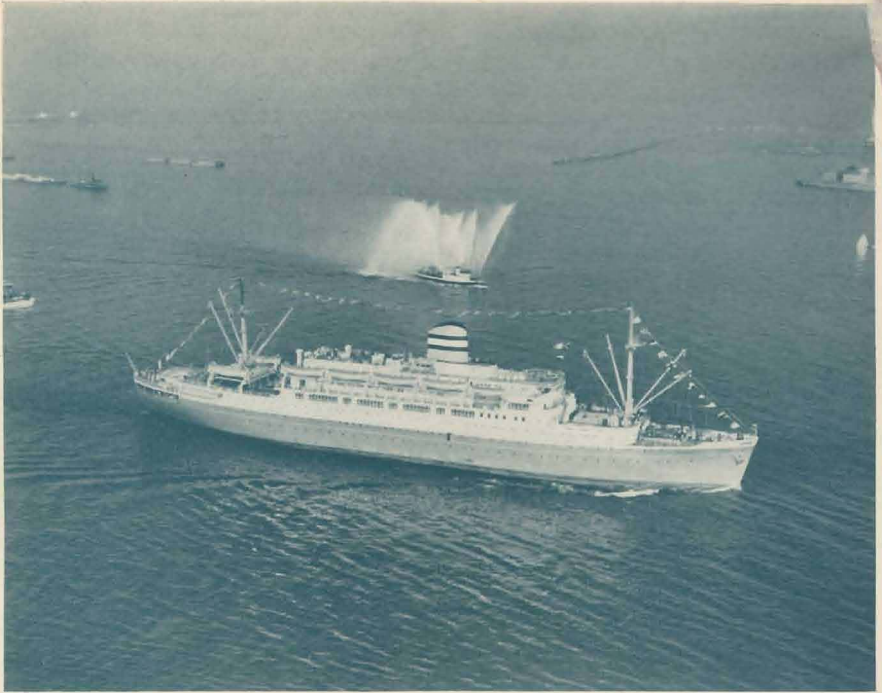
Submitted by DUTCH

(THE MAN DOWN BELOW)

From *S.S. Puerto Rico Advocate*

Published by Crew (Bull Line)





DUTCH LINER "RUYNDAM" ARRIVES IN NEW YORK ON MAIDEN VOYAGE

The Holland-America Line's newest passenger ship, *Ruyndam*, arrived in New York on July 25th with 845 passengers. Commanded by Capt. Folkert Dobbinga, the gray and white vessel offers luxury accommodations at modest prices, with tourist passengers having the run of the ship. All public rooms and cabins are air-conditioned.

The unusual appearance of the liner's "airplane wing" stack caused much comment among seafarers. Made of aluminum, the stack is designed to keep smoke and soot off the decks.

Some of the *Ruyndam's* crew found time while in port to visit the Netherlands Seamen's Home (club established in 1941 on the third floor of the Seamen's Church Institute), where they renewed friendships with shipmates on other Dutch vessels.

LEGACIES TO THE INSTITUTE

You are asked to remember this Institute in your will, that it may properly carry on its important work for seamen. While it is advisable to consult your lawyer as to the drawing of your will, we submit nevertheless the following as a clause that may be used:

"I give and bequeath to **"Seamen's Church Institute of New York,"** a corporation of the State of New York, located at 25 South Street, New York City, the sum of.....Dollars."

Note that the words **"of New York"** are a part of our title. If land or any specific property such as bonds, stocks, etc., is given, a brief description of the property should be inserted instead of the words, "the sum of.....Dollars."

Contributions and bequests to the Institute are exempt from Federal and New York State Tax.